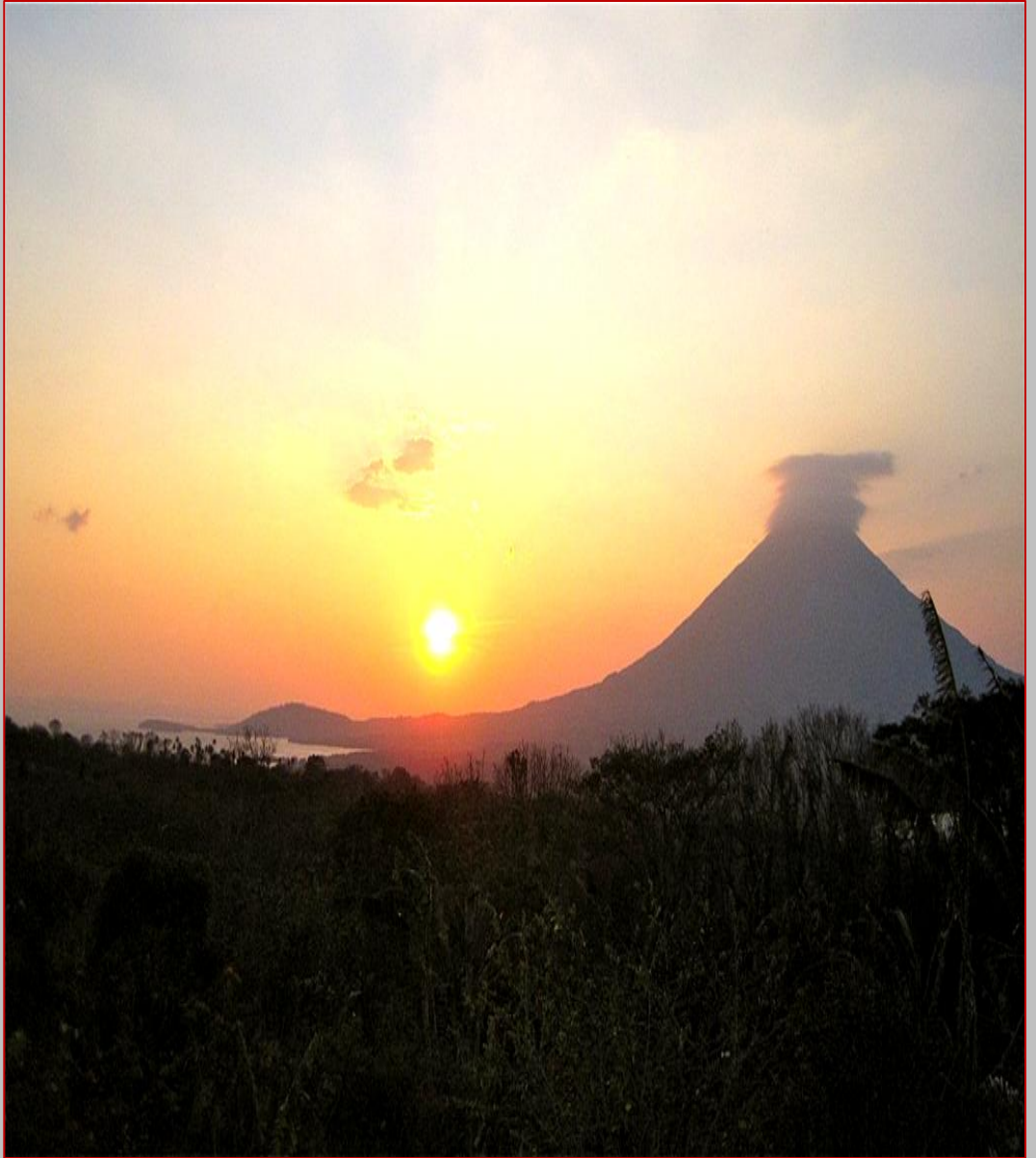


Take the Kid's Along Guides
by Marina K. Villatoro

TRAVEL

NiCARAGUA



**DESTINATION IN A DAY -
THE BEST OF NiCARAGUA**

NiCARAGUA

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Nicaragua is considered to be the largest country in Central America and often called the "Land of Lakes and Volcanoes".

The country is rich in natural attractions. It boasts one of the world's largest freshwater lakes and home to the only known species of freshwater sharks. Volcanoes in which many are still active surrounds the country's landscape.

Beautiful and unspoiled beaches, new ecotourism opportunities, and the reminiscent of the past colonial architecture in cities like Leon and Granada draw visitors wanting to explore the country.



WHAT TO SEE & DO

Visit the **Cathedral Ascension** which is the first major landmark in the center of Leon. It is the largest cathedral in all of Central America that took 100 years to complete. Take a tour of the whole cathedral, climb the roof and the bell tower where you can watch them manually ring the bells.

Walk around town and see different murals that depict the civil war. The murals are an interesting way of educating and recording Leon's history. Some murals were restored while some are painted over with new ones.

LEON

The colonial city of Leon has a lot to offer, a picture perfect town that borders the Pacific Ocean, great beaches, ruins of the past and picturesque volcanoes. Several churches and cathedrals are located in Leon than anywhere else in Nicaragua.

Visit the **civil war museum** where you would see several artifacts and remains of the past and most recent civil war of 1980's.

Sit along the city's central park and watch the locals daily life. Discover charming cafes and the side streets of Leon.

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MASAYA NATIONAL PARK

Masaya National Park is one of Nicaragua's most beautiful and interesting site. This is the most accessible active volcano in the world. You can literally drive up to the crater. Peek over the volcano's crater which continuously emitting smoke and sulfur gases.



WHAT TO SEE & DO

Five kilometers from the park's entrance is Masaya Volcano. You can drive uphill or ask a taxi driver to take you near the crater.

There are several look out points that are must do's and offering amazing views.

The Coyote Trail is where you walk in the tropical forest of the park. More than a kilometer walking trail that will lead you to the shores of Lake Masaya where you will see the petrified lava from Nindí's eruptions.

The El Comolito Trail and San Fernando Crater. The El Comolito Trail is where you see fumes rising up on the slope of the volcano while the San Fernando Crater is where you have magnificent panoramic views of the surroundings.

The Oviedo's Square is the main lookout point where you can drive uphill and park your car. You can have a closer look at the glowing lake of lava where it also constantly emitting vapor fumes with sulfur dioxide.

The Bobadilla cross lookout is where the replica of the cross being place by Catholic Frier Francisco Bobadilla was placed. You have to climb 184 steps to get to La Cruz de Bobadilla to get the panoramic and breathtaking view of the volcanoes, Lake Managua and Lake Masaya and the rest of the park's surroundings.

The Winds lookout is where you can have a good view of the three craters of the Nindiri Volcano.

The Bat Cave or the Tzinacanostoc is a tunnel that was formed from previous eruptions of the Santiago Crater. Here thousands of bats live.

The visitor center of Masaya National Park is located halfway up to the volcano. The center also has information about the lava flows and the flora and fauna of the park.

GRANADA

The oldest city in Nicaragua and one of the most popular destinations because of its rich colonial architecture. Walking along the streets you get the feeling that you travelled back in the days of the Spanish conquistadores. You can explore the rich natural beauty of Granada such as the Lake Nicaragua, Volcano Mombacho and its old cathedrals.



Visit the friendly monkey colony and admire the Stone statue and petroglyph in Isla El Muerto.

Take a walk on **Calle Calzada**, where you can enjoy a beer or a dinner. It is a closed pedestrian street with variety of outdoor restaurants, cafes and bars.

Take a horse carriage tour around Granada to see the city's beautiful colonial structures and feel the relaxed lifestyle in Granada where you would see rocking chairs on every patio.

WHAT TO SEE & DO

Hang out in the **central park** and watch the daily life of the locals. The park is surrounded by several colonial buildings and have a taste of their famous "vigoron", which is Granada's typical meal consisting of yucca, pig fat and vegetable salad with cacao drink on the sides.

Take a boat tour to **Las Isletas**. 365 islets that was formed when Mombacho volcano erupted 20,000 years ago. Each islet has wide varieties of unusual flora and fauna and water birds. Stop on San Pablo Island to see the XIX century's fortification.

OMETEPE ISLAND

Ometepe is an island formed by an eruption of two volcanoes, the Volcan Conception which has a perfect cone and the Volcan Madera. A strip of land connects the two volcanoes and has the best beaches on the island. Ometepe is admired for beautiful landscapes, rich archaeological background, beaches, several natural reserves and forest that is full of biodiversity. It is also the only lake island in the world with two volcanoes on it.



WHAT TO SEE & DO

To [explore the island](#), you can take a horse ride through the trails around the volcanoes. Taking several hours of horse ride along the beach while enjoying the scenery, you will also see several petroglyphs scattered on some fields. Horses can be rented throughout the island with rates similar to bikes.

Santo Domingo Beach is the famous beach in Ometepe. The sand here is light and finer.

Several activities such as small canopy-tour (zip lines), boat,

rowing windsurfing and kite surfing are offered. You can also enjoy bird watching while on Santo Domingo beach like the blue-tailed magpie which is abundant in the area.

At the end of the day, while enjoying your dinner with a cold drink take in one of the most beautiful sunsets over Conception Volcano.